

REMARKS

Claim 2 is amended and new Claim 21 is added, substantially as proposed in the May 12, 2005 fax to the Examiner and as subsequently discussed with the Examiner. Claims 3 and 4 are cancelled, and Claim 5 is amended to depend from new Claim 21. Claims 8-20 are cancelled without prejudice; the Applicant may file a continuation application directed to the subject matter of those cancelled claims. Claims 2, 5-7, and 21 remain, with no claim previously allowed.

Examiner Vaughn is thanked for the telephone interview conducted on May 17, 2005 with the undersigned attorney for the Applicants. During that interview, the proposed amendments to Claim 2 and new Claim 21 were discussed, with the undersigned pointing out why the prior art applied to Claim 2 does not make obvious the subject matter of that claim. Those reasons are amplified below. Following that discussion, the Examiner indicated that he would require further consideration of Claim 2 if amended as proposed, but that it initially appeared the two references currently applied against Claim 2 do not describe setting search-and-replace formats by clicking a cell having those formats. No commitment was reached during the interview regarding allowance of any claim. The undersigned indicated that the subject matter of Claims 8-20 might be withdrawn from the present application, subject to presentment in a later-filed continuation application.

Claim 2 differs from the proposed claim only by replacing "attributes" with --formatting characteristics-- for consistent terminology throughout that claim. Claim 21 as presented herein are identical to the corresponding claims discussed during the interview mentioned above.

Claim 2 defines a method for populating a plurality of fields in a find dialog of a spreadsheet program. This method comprises determining a plurality of formatting characteristics of a cell in the spreadsheet, and editing a plurality of fields in the find dialog to correspond to the plurality of formatting characteristics of a cell. The plurality of formatting characteristics of the cell is determined in response to moving a cursor over the cell containing those plural formatting characteristics, and clicking a mouse button to select the cell. By doing so, the formatting characteristics of the selected cell are determined and applied to the plurality of fields of the find dialog. The method of Claim 2 thus enables one to determine and apply plural formatting characteristics of an existing cell to populate the fields in a find dialog, simply by moving a cursor over that cell and clicking a mouse button to select the cell.

Details of the foregoing functions are found in the specification at page 13, lines 8-14; page 20 at lines 17-25; and at page 26, commencing at line 15 and with respect to Figure 16.

Claim 2 stands rejected as unpatentable over *Underdahl* in view of *WordPerfect V6.1*. The rejection states that *Underdahl* discloses a "Find/Replace" dialog for a spreadsheet program, and that *WordPerfect V6.1* teaches the use of a "Find/Replace" dialog which allows determining and editing of formatting characteristics. However, the Applicants respectfully submit that *Underdahl* and *WordPerfect*, singly or when taken together, fail to teach or suggest the method as set forth in Claim 2.

Underdahl teaches what looks like a more-or-less standard Find/Replace dialog box, having a Find text box to enter a present search string and a Replace text box to enter the replacement string. *WordPerfect* also discloses a Find and Replace function,

which allows searching for a "code" as well as words. (A code, as used in *WordPerfect*, appears to control formatting attributes.) According to *WordPerfect*, one can search for only one specific code at a time (page 160). *WordPerfect* includes a Find text box to enter a word or phrase, or to find a specific code by choosing "Specific Codes", selecting the code, and then entering a specific value in the Find text box (page 161, paragraph 4 of *WordPerfect*).

However, *Underdahl* and *WordPerfect* do not teach a computer-implemented method including determining a plurality of formatting characteristics of a spreadsheet cell by moving a cursor over the cell containing those plural formatting characteristics and clicking a mouse button to select the cell. A method including those steps comes only from the present Applicants, not from *Underdahl* and *WordPerfect*. One of ordinary skill in the art, knowing those references but not the present invention, finds no teaching or suggestion for determining plural formatting characteristics by moving a cursor over a cell containing those characteristics and clicking a mouse button to select the cell, whereby those formatting characteristics of the selected cell are determined and applied to plural fields in a find dialog. Accordingly, the method as defined by Claim 2 is patentable over that art.

New Claim 21, which depends from Claim 1, states that determining the plurality of formatting characteristics of the cell further comprises selecting an option of choosing the formatting characteristics from a formatted cell in the spreadsheet, and in response to selecting that option, changing the shape of the cursor from a first shape to a second shape distinct from the first shape. The distinct second shape of the cursor denotes to a user that moving the cursor over a cell and clicking the mouse button —as in the parent

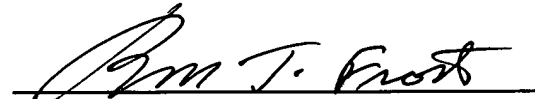
claim— will apply the attributes of that cell to the fields of the find dialog. New Claim 21 thus defines an overall combination of method elements even further removed from the teachings of *Underdahl* and *WordPerfect*. Those references fail to teach the option of determining formatting characteristics of a spreadsheet cell by moving a cursor over the cell and selecting the cell, and from those teachings one of ordinary skill in the art would find no reason to change the shape of a cursor. Accordingly, new Claim 21 defines patentable subject matter over *Underdahl* and *WordPerfect*.

The remaining claims depending directly or indirectly from Claim 2 likewise are patentable over the applied art.

The foregoing is submitted as a complete response to the Office Action identified above. The undersigned respectfully submits that the present application is in condition for allowance and solicits a notice to that effect.

Respectfully submitted,

MERCHANT & GOULD



Roger T. Frost
Reg. No. 22,176

Date: June 13, 2005

Merchant & Gould, LLC
P.O. Box 2903
Minneapolis, MN 55402-0903
Telephone: 404.954.5100

